

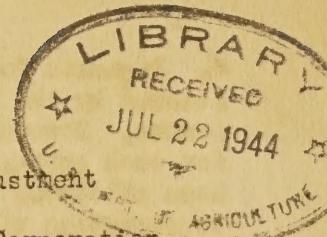
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FARM LABOR NOTES

June 12, 1941



TO: Claude R. Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture  
 Paul H. Appleby, Under Secretary  
 Grover B. Hill, Assistant Secretary  
 Members Department Agricultural Labor Committee  
 C. B. Baldwin, Farm Security Administration  
 R. M. Evans, Administrator, Agricultural Adjustment  
 Administration  
 John B. Hutson, President, Commodity Credit Corporation  
 C. W. Kitchen, Chief, Agricultural Marketing Service  
 H. R. Tolley, Chief, Bureau of Agricultural Economics  
 M. Clifford Townsend, Director, Office of Agricultural Defense  
 Relations  
 M. L. Wilson, Director of Extension

(Field Distribution as follows: Through M. L. Wilson to Chairmen, State Land Use Planning Committees and Chairman, State Farm Labor Subcommittees; through R. M. Evans to Chairmen, State AAA Committees; through H. R. Tolley to Secretaries, State Land Use Planning Committees; through C. W. Kitchen to State statisticians, ex officio members of State Farm Labor Subcommittees; through C. B. Baldwin to Field Labor Relations Specialists)

Chairman, State Land Use Planning Committees

Chairman, Farm Labor Subcommittees

FROM: Roy F. Hendrickson, Chairman, Department Agricultural Labor Committee

This digest of developments in the Agricultural Labor picture is issued for the purpose of economically distributing information to officials with interests and responsibilities in this field. It will not be issued at regular intervals and is not for public distribution. Copies are available for distribution to your field representatives on your request.

1. Agricultural Labor Subcommittees of State Land Use Committees have now been established in approximately 30 states. In some states, county committees have also been created. Substantial progress in uniting efforts of agencies -- federal, state and local -- in meeting problems of farm labor supply is being made by most of these. Several subcommittees have initiated specific measures to promote the use of the Employment Service by farmers, made arrangements to recruit high school and college students for seasonal farm work, promoted plans for pooling and rotating labor by farmers, and made surveys of labor needs.

2. The State Subcommittees ordinarily consist of representatives of the Agricultural Marketing Service, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Extension Service, Farm Security Administration, State Employment Service, and Work Projects Administration, and of the farmers.

3. Selective Service Headquarters in Washington has informally recommended that Subcommittees establish a working relationship with their respective State Selective Service Headquarters. This has been done in a few states. The occupational adviser to State Selective Headquarters is recommended as a logical point of contact.

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4. Requests for the establishment of migratory labor camps, a program administered by the Farm Security Administration, have increased greatly in recent months. However, difficulties are faced in obtaining all needed materials for such camps. Available funds for this years construction program have now been allotted. The 41 standard and 23 mobile camps now completed or under construction will consist of a total of 6,903 shelters, 5,724 tent platforms and 2,122 labor homes.

a. Standard camps are now in operation in the following places:

Arizona	- Agua Fria, 11-mile corner, Yuma
California	- Arvin, Brawley, Ceres, Firebaugh, Gridley, Indio, Shafter, Thornton, Tulare, Westley Winters, Woodville, Yuba City
Florida	- Everglades, Okeechobee, Osceola, Pahokee, Pompano
Idaho	- Caldwell, Twin Falls
Missouri	- East Prairie, Gray Ridge, Kennett, North Lilbourn, South Lilbourn, Morehouse, Wardell, Wyatt -- (These are 500 labor homes. The families have gardens and run a cooperative farm. They work as day laborers the remainder of the time.)
Oregon	- Yamhill
Texas	- Crystal City, Harlingen, Princeton, Raymondville, Robstown, Sinton, Weslaco
Washington	- Granger, Walla Walla, Yakima

b. New sites at which standard camps are under construction:

Arkansas	- Springdale
Florida	- Canal Point, Redland, South Dade
Texas	- Lamesa, McAllen (New units are also being added at former sites)

c. Mobile camps will be routed to the following points during the next six months (tentative schedule):

Idaho	- (2 mobiles and 3 submobiles) Wilder, Burley, Nampa, Midway, Driggs, Victor, Blackfoot, Shelley
Oregon	- (4 mobiles and 3 submobiles) Nyssa, Gresham, Pleasant Home, Mountain Dale, Athena, Linn County, Lane County, Stayton, Grants Pass, Independence, Tule Lake, Malin, Merrill, Odell, Bonanza
Washington	- (2 mobiles) Toppenish, Auburn and Wenatchee Valley
Arizona	- (3 mobiles - routing not scheduled) The camps are now at Green Reservoir and Casa Grande
California	- (6 mobiles - routing not scheduled) The camps are now at Beaumont, Edison, Big Store, Arizona, Holtville, Santa Paula and Woodville

d. Standard camps approved but not under construction:

California - San Jose  
Colorado - Palisade

5. The Agricultural Marketing Service's schedule for releases of the "Farm Labor Report" on agricultural labor statistics for the remainder of the calendar year follows: June 13, July 11, August 15, September 12, October 13, November 14, December 12.

6. The full text of the announcement of General Hershey, Deputy Director of the Selective Service System and Secretary Wickard's letter to him follows:

May 24, 1941

"MEMORANDUM TO ALL STATE DIRECTORS

"SUBJECT: OCCUPATIONAL DEFERMENT -- AGRICULTURE

"The following letter from the Secretary of Agriculture to the Acting Director of Selective Service is published for the information of all concerned. This memorandum will be disseminated to all local Selective Service agencies in your State. The importance of agriculture in the national defense program cannot be overestimated. The most serious consideration will be given to the information contained in the following letter by all local boards in examining claims for occupational deferment by those engaged in agricultural pursuits.

"Brig. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey  
Acting Director, Selective Service System  
Washington, D. C.

"Dear General Hershey:

"In cooperation with your office this Department has given and will continue to give close attention to the effect of the national defense program on the farmer and upon agricultural production.

"Assurance of adequate food supplies not only for the United States but, under the Lend-Lease Act, for Great Britain and other nations resisting aggression makes it necessary to increase substantially the production of pork, dairy products, eggs, poultry, dried beans, and vegetables, and to at least maintain the production of feed grains, fruits, beef, and lamb at present levels.

"The national defense program has drawn heavily upon the supply of farm labor and maintaining an adequate supply of farm workers for production of essential foods required for national defense is becoming a serious problem.

"The problem is very serious in some areas; in others not acute. There has been a reduction in the supply of available farm labor in the major geographic divisions of the United States between April 1, 1940, and April 1, 1941, by the following percentages: New England, 25.1 percent; Middle Atlantic States 25.9 percent; East North Central States, 21.6 percent; West North Central States, 16.1 percent; South Atlantic States, 18.4 percent; East South Central States, 11.6 percent; West South Central States, 13.5 percent; Mountain States, 15.7 percent; Pacific States, 19.3 percent. The decrease for the United States as a whole during this period was 17.8 percent.

"These declines in some areas of course have not brought about shortages in the supply of farm labor owing to the large surpluses of labor supply existing in the spring of 1940. However, in other States and sections of States the decreases have produced a serious shortage of regular farm labor. The shortages of regular laborers are reported from the following areas:

(1) The ten States between New Hampshire and Virginia along the Atlantic Seaboard, Vermont, and the two States of Ohio and Michigan -- in these States general farm labor shortages now exist; (2) the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia - in those States farm labor shortages exist around defense activities; (3) Indiana, Illinois, southern Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Arizona - in these States farm labor shortages are confined to special areas or crops. The most acute shortages are in New England and the Middle Atlantic States. The acute shortages of regular farm laborers in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia center largely around defense activities. In Ohio, Indiana, southern Wisconsin and Illinois the shortage appears to be acute in the dairy and truck-crop areas and in those areas surrounding defense activities.

"We have informed our field representatives that the operators of many family-sized farms are requesting occupational deferment when in fact they should be claiming deferment on account of dependency. These are cases in which the father is too old or infirm to operate the farm or a widowed mother is dependent upon the income from the farm and the income is not sufficient to hire outside help.

"This Department desires to help in every way possible to make farmer registrants and farm operators aware of the principles of Selective Service, their rights and privileges under the law, and the functions of the local board.

"We are making special studies of particularly critical types of farming and farming areas and as promptly as additional information on the current farm labor situation becomes available I will transmit it to you. Let me urge that, to the greatest extent possible, the Selective Service System give very careful consideration to the workers urgently needed for production of the foods vital to defense, so that the agricultural industries producing food for defense will have an adequate supply of labor.

"I appreciate the splendid cooperation of your office and your deep appreciation of the problem of American agriculture in this emergency.

"Sincerely yours,

(Signed) CLAUDE R. WICKARD, Secretary

LEWIS B. HERSHEY, Deputy Director"

7. On March 15, the Undersecretary of Agriculture notified Howard O. Hunter, Acting Commissioner of the Work Projects Administration, of the program for establishment of Labor Subcommittees of the State Land Use Planning Committees and suggested clarification of the WPA's policy on release of relief workers when opportunities for farm labor employment existed. On April 3, WPA issued Work Projects Administration Letter No. 6, addressed to all State Work Projects Administrators on the "Cooperation with State Subcommittees on Farm-Labor." Letter No. 6 and Howard O. Hunter's Memorandum of November 30, 1940 clarifying the policy on release of WPA workers follow in full:

April 3, 1941

Employment Letter No. 6

TO: All State Work Projects Administrators

SUBJECT: Cooperation with State Sub-committees on Farm Labor

The Department of Agriculture has indicated that in 1941 there may exist, along with large surpluses of agricultural labor, serious dislocations of such labor of a local or seasonal nature. The Work Projects Administration has always been committed to a program of facilitating the return of certified persons to private employment. The Honorable Claude R. Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture, has requested the Administration to participate on a state basis with State Sub-committees on Farm Labor in meeting such dislocation problems as they may arise.

The Department of Agriculture has suggested that State Land-Use Planning Committees establish State Sub-committees on Farm Labor to meet these problems. The Department of Agriculture desires to obtain for the State Sub-committees on Farm Labor the cooperation of the State representatives of the Farm Security Administration, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, State Statistician of the Agricultural Marketing Service, State Extension Service, State Employment Service, and also the State Work Projects Administration.

For detailed information on this program, the following releases of the Department of Agriculture are attached hereto:\*

1. "Reorganization of Department's Agricultural Labor Committee and Procedure for Dealing with the Problems of Farm Labor Supply", Memorandum No. 820, Supplement 2, released by the Honorable Claude R. Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture, March 10, 1941.

2. "Suggestions for Facilitating the Work of State Sub-committees on Farm Labor", No. FL-1-41, released by the United States Department of Agriculture, March 10, 1941.

3. A list of Secretaries of the State Land-Use Committees.

In keeping with the same principles set forth in Mr. Howard O. Hunter's Memorandum of November 30, 1940 on "Private and Public Employment of Certified Persons", and also Mr. Fred R. Rauch's Memorandum of September 25, 1940, on the Work Projects Administration-Social Security Board Understanding, the State Work Projects Administrator is requested to designate a representative of the Division of Employment to cooperate with the State Sub-committee on Farm Labor.

/s/ M. J. MILLER  
Malcolm J. Miller  
Assistant Commissioner

\*Three copies of each attachment sent to each Regional Director and one copy to each State Administrator

November 30, 1940

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: All State Work Projects Administrators

FROM: Howard O. Hunter

SUBJECT: Private and Public Employment of Certified Persons

The expansion of private and public employment is providing increased employment opportunities, and it is essential to the interests of certified persons and of the Nation that every effort be made, consistent with established Federal policy, to facilitate the obtaining by certified persons of private and public jobs for which they qualify. The assignment and continued employment of such persons on projects financed with WPA funds

is secondary to the responsibility of facilitating the obtaining by such persons of private or public jobs.

This responsibility of the Work Projects Administration shall be scrupulously observed and shall not be mitigated by the labor requirements of either defense or nondefense projects. Certified persons have a responsibility as well as a right to take advantage of private and public employment opportunities, and this responsibility shall be protected even though their services are needed on projects. Both defense and nondefense projects shall release certified employees when appropriate private or public employment is available.

The intent of Congress in this respect clearly appears in the provisions of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, fiscal year 1941, which are designed to encourage certified project employees to accept private or public employment by guaranteeing, subject to certain conditions, the re-employment of such persons on WPA projects upon termination of the private or public employment. These provisions of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, fiscal year 1941, are expressed in section 16 as follows:

"(a) No person in need who refuses a bona fide offer of private or other public employment under reasonable working conditions which pays the prevailing wage for such work in the community where he resides and who is capable of performing such work shall be employed or retained in employment on work projects under the funds appropriated in this joint resolution for the period such private or other public employment would be available.

"(b) Any person who takes such employment shall at the expiration thereof be entitled to immediate resumption of his previous employment status with the Work Projects Administration if he is still in need and if he has lost such employment through no fault of his own, and if he has first drawn all the benefits of unemployment compensation that shall have accrued to him during his term in private employment and which are available to him."

In order that project employees may be fully informed of the policies of the Work Projects Administration with regard to private or public employment of certified persons, the attached notice shall be reproduced by each State Administration and posted and maintained on all project sites.

N O T I C E

TO: All Project Wage Employees

It is your responsibility to take advantage of all opportunities for private and public employment. You are required to accept bona fide offers of private or public employment, whether of a permanent or temporary nature, in accordance with section 16 of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, fiscal year 1941 provided:

1. You are capable of performing such work.
2. The wage for such employment is not less than the prevailing wage for such work in the community where you reside.
3. Such employment is not in conflict with established union relationships.
4. Such employment provides reasonable working conditions

It is, therefore, important that you make every effort to obtain such employment. Seek employment with employers in your community. Advise the local employment office of the State Employment Service about your work experience with the Work Projects Administration and on other jobs. Ask the local employment office to refer you to available jobs for which you qualify.

If you leave WPA employment for private or public employment, and lose such employment, you are entitled to reassignment on a WPA project, provided: (1) you lose the job through no fault of your own, (2) you are still in need, and (3) you have drawn all unemployment compensation benefits available to you.

If you do not accept such offers of private or public employment, you will lose your present assignment and you will be ineligible for reassignment during the period for which such private or public employment is available.

Therefore, take advantage of all offers of jobs for which you qualify.

S/ HOWARD HUNTER

Howard O. Hunter  
Acting Commissioner of  
Work Projects

#### 8. Farm Labor Employment and Supply

The Agricultural Marketing Service reports that at 97 percent of the 1910-1914 average, the June 1 index of farm employment was one point more than the usual seasonal rise. This tends to confirm earlier forecasts that increased demands for farm products and retardation of spring operations by adverse weather would cause greater than normal labor requirements for latter May and early June. Heavy rains, delaying harvest operations in the West South Central States and necessitating the use of binders in place of combines in certain areas, coupled with prospects of higher yields of small grains, may project greater than normal labor requirements for those areas into latter June and early July.

AMS reports further indicate that, although total farm employment on June 1, 1941 was nearly 900,000 more than on May 1, 1941, there were 257,000 fewer family workers than a year ago and only an increase of 10,000 in the hired labor force over the same date in 1940. The supply of farm labor on April 1 averaged 75 percent of normal for the nation - down 18 percent from a year earlier. (The next AMS report on supply of labor will be released on July 11.)

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics reports that large numbers of skilled and reliable regular farm workers have been lost to industry and to the military forces in nearly every major agricultural area. As might be expected, the greatest shift of labor from rural to urban areas has occurred in areas surrounding industrial centers and army cantonments. Greatest decreases in supply appear in the dairy, poultry, vegetable, and canning sections of the East, North Central, Middle Atlantic, and New England States.

Shortages of seasonal harvest labor and food processing workers are apparent or anticipated for at least thirty states, and especially in the Atlantic Seaboard States from Maine to North Carolina and in the Lake Plains area from Lake Michigan east. The valleys of the Pacific Coast have suffered great decreases in labor supply, but previous surpluses in California still form a potential reservoir for the entire Coast. Large numbers of California workers, moved into Oregon to help meet the deficit of approximately 4,000 workers for the strawberry harvest. Oregon, Connecticut, and Illinois have actively recruited high school students to meet harvest peaks in truck crops.

Farm Security Administration reports that migrants are passing by certain areas along the Atlantic Coast because of lack of adequate housing. Nearly everywhere the volume of the migratory movement appears to be diminishing.

Adequate supplies of farm labor appear to exist in the southern Appalachians, and generally in cotton and tobacco areas with the exception of the tobacco areas of Connecticut, Maryland, and Virginia. The same situation is indicated for the Mountain States, the cut-over areas of the Upper Great Lakes, and part of California. Surpluses are indicated in the Rocky Mountain belt except in Idaho. No immediate shortages of labor are apparent for the Great Plains States except in very localized areas and for farm help with mechanical ability.

Reasons to which conditions of supply are attributed vary greatly by geographic areas, as indicated by letters from farmers and opinions of individual crop reporters. Ten out of 50 farmers reporting from New York gave Selective Service as the reason for decreased supply; 17 mentioned industry;

others, wage rates or gave no reason. None of them mentioned WPA. Reports from Michigan indicate about the same feeling as in New York. A similar sample of 205 farmers of North Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Oklahoma indicates only 4% attributed the conditions of supply to Selective Service, 14.6% to defense activity and 24% to WPA and PWA.

Roy F. Hendrickson

Director of Personnel  
Chairman, Agricultural Labor Committee